

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-02

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USIA-06 /053 W

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R 200055Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4890

INFO AMCONSUL CUIDAD JUAREZ

AMCONSUL GUADALAJARA

AMCONSUL HERMOSILLO

AMCONSUL MATAMOROS

AMCONSUL MAZATLAN

AMCONSUL MERIDA

AMCONSUL MONTERREY

AMCONSUL NUEVO LAREDO

AMCONSUL TIJUANA

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EO 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT MX

SUBJ: ABANDONMENT OF PROPOSAL TO CREATE SYSTEM OF AT

"AT LARGE" SENATORS

REF: MEXICO 9325 (PARA 5)

1. SUMMARY: OUT OF PUBLIC VIEW, SENATE APPARENTLY HAS PERSUADED PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA TO ABANDON HIS ANNOUNCED INTENTION OF CREATING A SYSTEM OF "AT LARGE" SENATORS, INDICATING LEGISLATIVE OCCASIONALLY DOES EXERCISE SOME INFLUENCE OVER EXECUTIVE BRANCH. END SUMMARY.

2. REF. REPORTED THAT PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA ANNOUNCED INTENTION OF SENDING A PROPOSAL TO THE MWCIAN CONGRESS WHICH WOULD CREATE A SYSTEM OF "AT LARGE" SENATORS SIMILAR

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TO THE "AT LARGE" DEPUTY SYSTEM IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES.

LATTER SYSTEM PROVIDES THAT MINORITY PARTIES RECEIVING
MINIMUM OF 1.5 PERCENT OF POPULAR VOTE IN FEDERAL ELECTIONS
ARE ENTITLED (IN ADDITION TO SEATS WON OUTRIGHT) TO 5
SEATS IN THE CHAMBER OF DEPUTIES, PLUS ONE SEAT FOR EACH
ADDITIONAL 0.5 PERCENT OF THE VOTES POLLED, UP TO A
MAXIMUM OF 25 SEATS FOR EACH PARTY.

3. ALTHOUGH PRESIDENTIAL ANNOUNCEMENT WON FAVORABLE
COMMENT FROM THE PRESS, THE PPS (POPULAR SOCIALIST PARTY)
THE PARM (AUTHENTIC PARTY OF MEXICAN REVOLUTION) AND
QUARDED SUPPORT FROM THE PAN (PARTY OF NATIONAL ACTION),
SEVERAL SENATROS OPPOSED IDEA, GRUMBLING THAT OPPOSITION
PARTIES OUGHT TO HAVE TO WIN THE SEATS OUTRIGHT. SINCE
EARLY NOVEMBER THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE OR NO PUBLIC DIS-
CUSSION OF THE IDEA.

4. ON NOV. 18 LIC. ALEJANDRO CARRILLO MARCOR, SENATOR
FROM SONORA AND DIRECTOR OF SEMI-OFFICIAL PAPER EL NACIONAL,
TOLD EMBOFF THAT THE EXECUTIVE WOULD NOT SEND SUCH A
PROPOSAL TO THE CONGRESS. CARRILLO SAID "WE" TOLD THE
PRESIDENT THAT THE PROPOSAL WOULD BE UNCONSTITUTIONAL,
SINCE IT WOULD VIOLATE THE CONCEPT (PRESENT IN MEXICAN
CONSTITUTIONS SINCE 1824) THAT SENATORS REPRESENT SOVEREIGN
STATES WHICH HAVE JOINED FREELY IN A FEDERAL REPUBLIC.
SENATORS, CARRILLO SAID, UNLIKE DEPUTIES, REPRESENT
STATES, NOT PEOPLE; TO HAVE INTRODUCED "AT LARGE"
SENATORS WOULD HAVE BROKEN THE CONSTITUTIONAL NORM OF TWO
SENATORS PER STATE. ASKED IF IT WASN'T UNUSUAL THAT THE
PRESIDENT PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED THE PROPOSAL PRIOR TO CONSULTATION
WITH THE SENATE, CARRILLO SAID THAT WAS LESS UNUSUAL
THAN THE SENATE'S PERSUADING THE PRESIDENT NOT TO SEND
THE MEASURE AT ALL. HOWEVER, CARRILLO WENT ON TO CITE
SENATE MODIFICATION (IN 70 INSTANCES) OF AN EXECUTIVE
PROPOSED LAW ON AGRICULTURAL SANITATION AS AN EXAMPLE
OF SLOWLY INCREASING CONGRESSIONAL INDEPENDENCE. CARRILLO
ALSO GAVE INSTANCE OF SENATE INITIATIVE WHICH BECAME LAW
(TWO YEARS AGO). ASKED ABOUT SENATE ROLE IN MODIFYING
FISCAL REFORM PACKAGE, CARRILLO ACKNOWLEDGED OPPOSITION
IN SENATE (ALL SENATORS ARE PRI MEMBERS) BUT VOLUNTEERED
NO FURTHER COMMENT.
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5. COMMENT: ECHEVERRIA'S ANNOUNCEMENT, BURIED IN AN
OTHERWISE UNEVENTFUL SPEECH COMMEMORATING THE LATE
PRESIDENTS' CALLES AND CARDENAS, WAS MADE WITHOUT FANFARE,
BUT NONETHELESS PRODUCED HEADLINES AND A GREAT DEAL OF
PUBLIC INTEREST FOR A WEEK OR SO. ALTHOUGH THE EXECUTIVE
NO DOUBT COULD HAVE FORCED THE CONGRESS TO AMEND THE
CONSTITUTION AND TO PASS THE INITIATIVE, THAT IT DID NOT

CHOOSE TO DO SO PROBABLY INDICATES A LACK OF DEEP COMMITMENT
TO THE IDEA AS WELL AS A DESIRE TO AVOID ANY PUBLIC
DISCREPANCIES WITHIN THE PRI. TO A LIMITED EXTENT,
AND UNDER CERTAIN CONDITIONS, (E.G. AS LONG AS IT'S HANDED
OUT OF PUBLIC VIEW) MEXICO'S NORMALLY RUBBER STAMP CONGRESS
CAN EXERCISE INFLUENCE OVER THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH.

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